

AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR
LEADERSHIP FOR WOMEN

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AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S VIEWS OF PM GILLARD AND MR ABBOTT

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RESEARCH STUDY FINDINGS

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The Australian Centre for Leadership for Women (ACLW), a virtual Centre at www.leadershipforwomen.com.au conducted a research study between 19 December 2012 and 31 December 12 to explore and understand through an online survey how women view Prime Minister Gillard and Opposition Leader, Tony Abbott's performance in terms of their leadership and understanding of women's issues.

231 women responded to the online survey. The participants represent an interesting cross section of online Australian women on women's lists, women's organisations and networks.

77% of the women participants were 41+ years. 92% of the women had postgraduate qualifications. 79% of the women were employed. The majority of the women were employed full-time. The women were predominantly in professional occupations, the majority being in Education followed by Professional, Scientific and Technical Services, and Health Care and Social Assistance and Other Services. The majority of women participants resided in an Australian Capital City.

74% (171) gave high scores indicating their approval of the way Ms Gillard is handling her job as Prime Minister. 26% (60) gave low scores, disapproving of Ms Gillard's job performance.

When asked 'what was Gillard's main strength as Prime Minister', 311 positive comments and 32 negative comments were made about PM Gillard. Foremost were reflections to do with legislative and policy achievements. Perceived qualities of her determination and tenacity ranked second, followed by her calmness and taking a careful considered approach. The negative comments predominantly reflected the view that 'she has no strengths, only flaws.'

About the way Mr Abbott is handling his job as Leader of the Opposition, 85% (196) gave low scores indicating their disapproval. 15% (35) gave high scores, in approval of his performance.

18 positive comments on Abbot's role as Opposition Leader were led by reflections about the 'media portrayal being unfair.' 318 negative comments were led by reflections of Abbott's 'relentless negativity.'

As to who would make the better PM, 59% (137) chose Ms Julia Gillard. 7% (17) chose Mr Abbott. 15% (35) chose the option, 'Neither.' 18% (42) did not respond.

72% (166) gave high scores approving that Prime Minister Gillard is someone who understands the challenges facing Australian women.

However, when asked to comment on this, 54% of the comments reflected perceptions that Ms Gillard is not addressing the challenges facing Australian women and 46% of the comments reflected that she is.

87% (202) gave low scores disapproving that Mr Tony Abbott is someone who understands the challenges facing Australian women.

82% of the comments reflected perceptions that Mr Tony Abbott is not addressing the challenges facing Australian women and 18% of the comments reflected that he is.

The Electoral issue most women want addressed is Equality followed by the Economy and Pay Equity.

As to who is more likely to address it, 46% (107) chose Julia Gillard. 7% (16) chose Tony Abbott. 22% (50) chose 'Neither.' 18% (42) did not answer this question. 7% (16) chose the option 'Can't Say.'

When asked if Prime Minister Gillard is someone who is trustworthy, 65% (149) chose high scores in agreement. 35% (82) chose lower scores in disagreement.

12% (27) chose high scores in agreement of Mr Abbott being someone who is trustworthy. 70% (161) chose lower scores in disagreement. 19% (43) did not answer this question.

In the next Federal election, 28% (64) indicated that they will be voting for the Australian Labor Party. 21% (49) were Undecided. 18% (42) indicated the Australian Greens and 10% (24) chose the Liberal/National Coalition.

In the 2010 Australian Federal Election, 34% (78) indicated they voted for the Australian Labor Party. 23% (53) indicated the Australian Greens and 14% (33) chose the Liberal/National Coalition.

Of the 170 women who indicated which party they had voted for and will be voting for, there will be no changes in voting preferences for 58% of women. 8% will be changing their preference to vote for the Australian Labor Party. 2% will be changing their preference to vote for the Liberal/National Coalition. 5% will be changing their preference to vote for the Australian Greens. 22% of the women indicated that they were undecided about their voting preference for the next Federal Election.

With an Australian Federal Election scheduled for 2013, the Australian Centre for Leadership for Women (ACLW), a virtual Centre at www.leadershipforwomen.com.au invited women to participate in an online survey between 19 December 2012 to 31 December 2012 to explore women's views of Prime Minister Gillard and Opposition Leader Tony Abbott as an eventful year came to a close.

The Survey was designed and analysed by Dr Rodgers-Healey using descriptive statistics and frequency distributions, and qualitative/ quantitative Content Analysis for textual data. Eva Cox's input in the survey design is gratefully acknowledged.

The findings are reported below.

Participants of Study

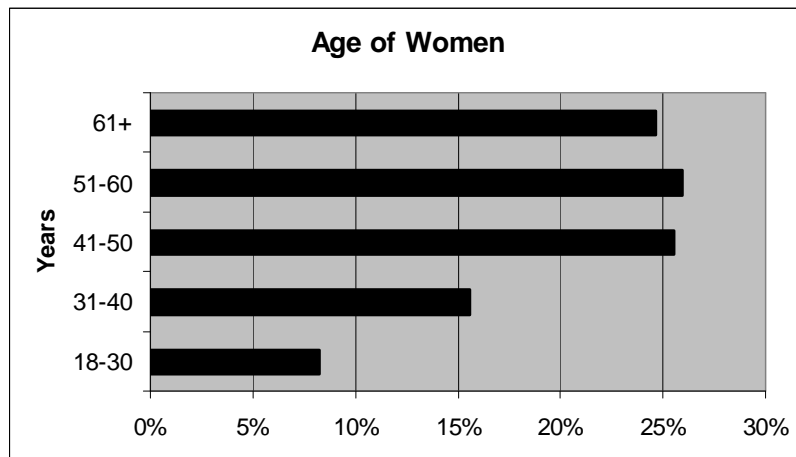
In total, 231 women responded to the online survey.

Characteristics of the participants in terms of age, education, status of employment, industry of employment and place of residence in Australia are indicated below.

i) Age

77% of the women participants were 41+ years.

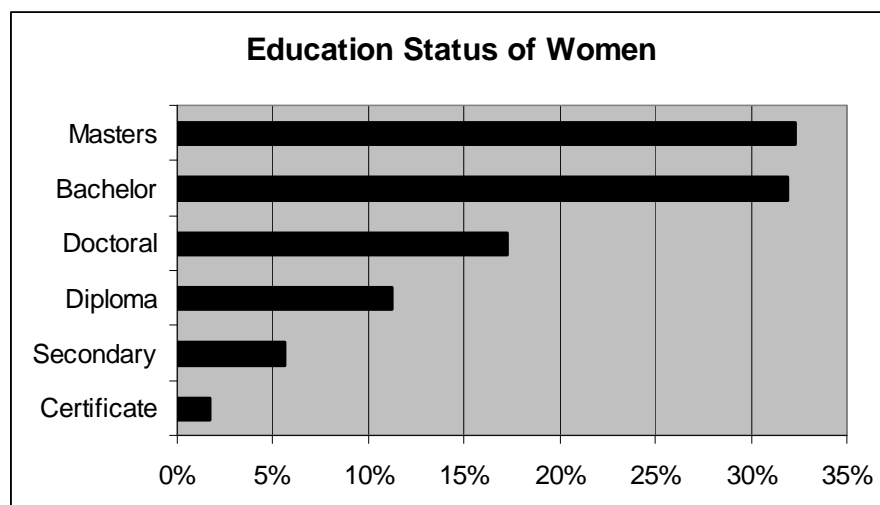
Years	Number of Women	%
18-30	19	8%
31-40	36	16%
41-50	59	26%
51-60	60	26%
61+	57	25%
Total	231	100%



ii) Education

94% of the women participants had postgraduate qualifications.

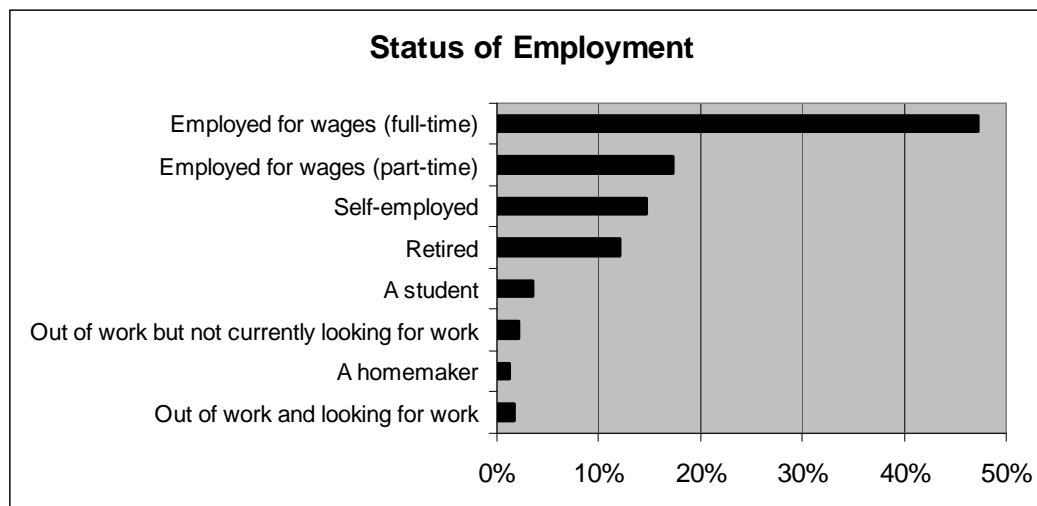
Qualification	Number of Women	%
Secondary	13	6%
Certificate	4	2%
Diploma	26	11%
Doctoral	40	17%
Bachelor	73	32%
Masters	74	32%
Unknown	1	0%
Total	231	100



iii) Status of Employment

79% of the women participants were employed. The majority of the women were employed full-time.

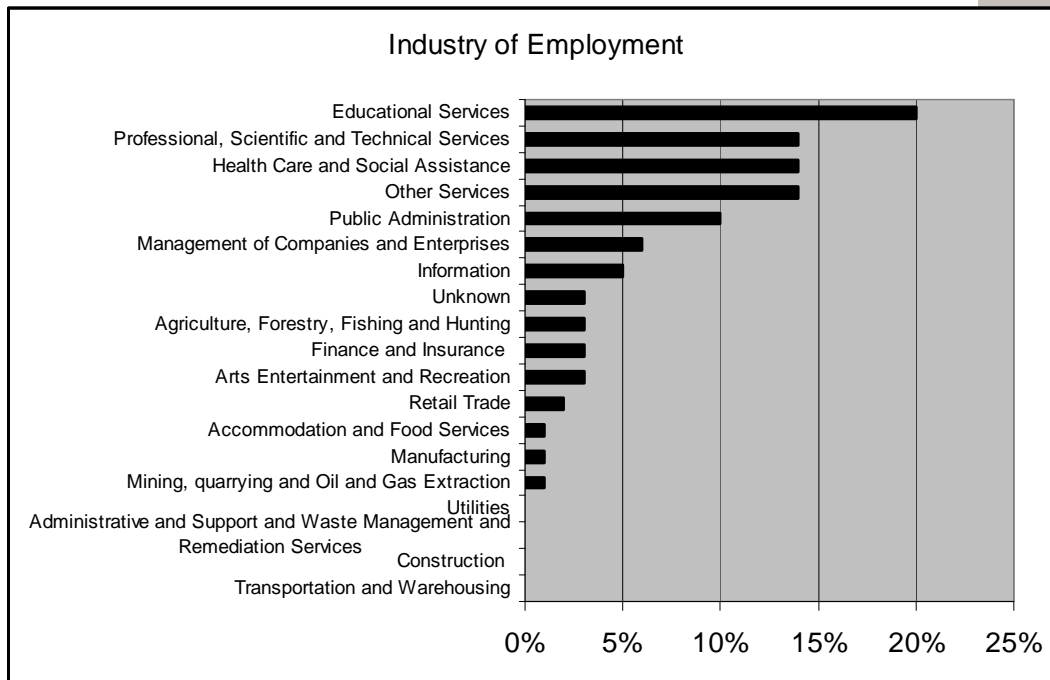
Employment Status	Number of Women	%
Out of work and looking for work	4	2%
A homemaker	3	1%
Out of work but not currently looking for work	5	2%
A student	8	3%
Retired	28	12%
Self-employed	34	15%
Employed for wages (part-time)	40	17%
Employed for wages (full-time)	109	47%
Total	231	100%



iv) Industry of Employment

The women were predominantly in professional occupations, the majority being in Education followed by Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; Health Care and Social Assistance, and Other Services.

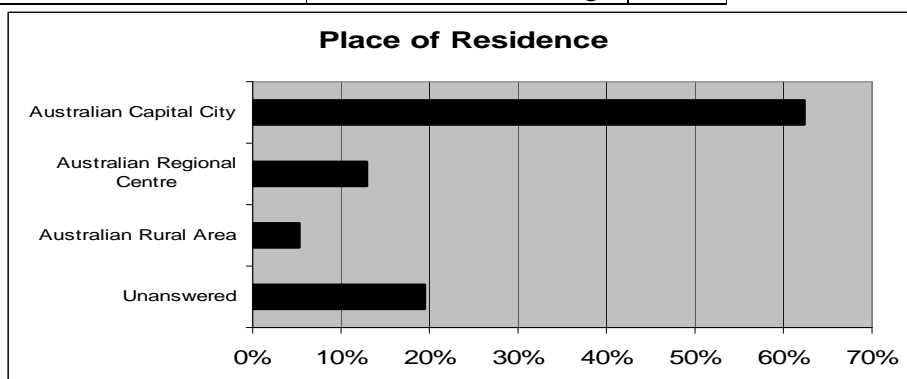
Industry	Number of Women	%
Educational Services	46	20%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	32	14%
Health Care and Social Assistance	32	14%
Other Services	32	14%
Public Administration	22	10%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	14	6%
Information	12	5%
Unknown	8	3%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	7	3%
Finance and Insurance	6	3%
Arts Entertainment and Recreation	6	3%
Retail Trade	4	2%
Accommodation and Food Services	2	1%
Manufacturing	2	1%
Mining, quarrying and Oil and Gas Extraction	2	1%
Utilities	1	0%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	1	0%
Construction	1	0%
Transportation and Warehousing	1	0%
Total	231	100%



v) Place of Residence

Of the women who responded, the majority of women participants resided in an Australian Capital City.

Place of Residence	Number of Women	%
Unanswered	45	19%
Australian Rural Area	12	5%
Australian Regional Centre	30	13%
Australian Capital City	144	62%
Total	231	100%



Findings

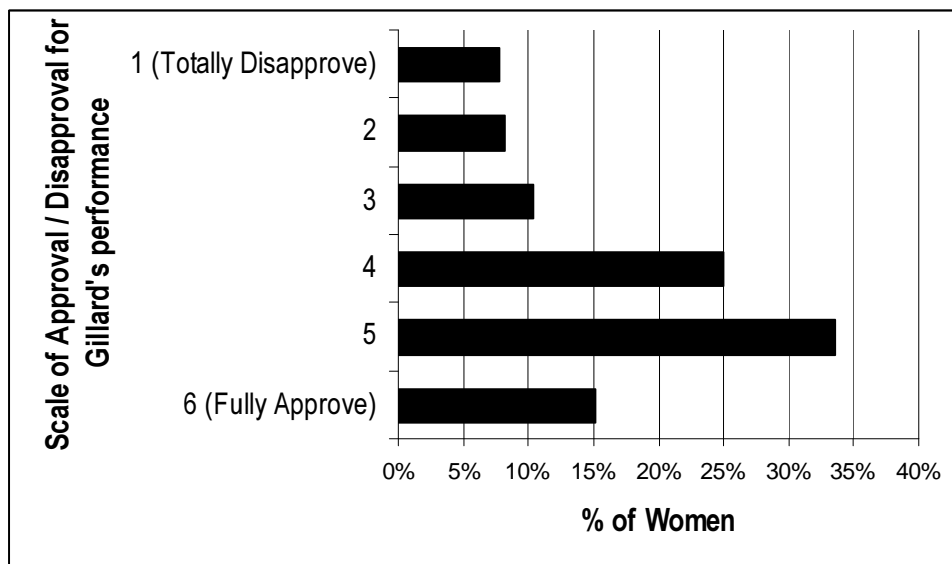
Findings

The findings for each of the survey's questions (*italicised in blue*) are below.

1. Ms Julia Gillard's Job as Prime Minister

On a scale of one to six, do you approve or disapprove of the way Ms Julia Gillard is handling her job as Prime Minister? 1 - Totally Disapprove through to 6 - Fully Approve

74% (171) responded with a score of 4 and above. The highest score was a 5 by 34% (78) of the participants. 15% (35) fully approved of Ms Gillard's handling her job as Prime Minister. 26% (60) responded with a score of 3 and below.



2. Gillard's main strength as Prime Minister

What is Gillard's main strength as Prime Minister?

311 positive comments and 32 negative comments were made about PM Gillard. The Table below shows the ranking of frequency of positive and negative themes.

Ranking of Frequency	Themes in comments on Gillard's Strengths	Number of Comments related to the theme
POSITIVE COMMENTS::		
1	Achieved legislative reform and policies despite obstacles	45
2	Determination and Tenacity	39
	Calm and measured	37
3	Ability to negotiate	32
4	Strong	29
5	Can stand up for herself	25
6	Resilient	17
7	Intelligent	15
8	Team player in party	14
9	Visionary	13
10	Has Self belief	12
11	Has Integrity	10
12	Impressive speaker	9
13	She is a woman	8
14	Understands Australians	6
Total Positive comments made related to the themes:		311
NEGATIVE COMMENTS:		
1	Has No Strengths, but flaws	16
2	Is Good, but could do better	7
3	Uses Gender; How she became PM by deposing Rudd; Is a Party Follower;	3 (for each theme)
Total Negative comments made related to the themes:		32
	Unsure	3

Foremost were reflections to do with PM Gillard's legislative and policy achievements. Perceived qualities of her determination and tenacity ranked second, with those focusing on her calmness and taking a careful considered approach, ranking third in frequency. Perceptions of her ability to negotiate, strength to withstand the pressures and address sexism were themes that ranked next in frequency.

Examples of the comments:

"Ability to keep focused on important legislative changes many of which have been achieved"
"Ability to steer reforms through the legislative process"
"her tenacity and quiet determination to see things through"
"she is tough and doesn't back down from a fight"
"Her ability to stay cool, when things are heating up."
"Her ability to negotiate, heading a minority government"
"strength and dignity in the face of personal abuse"
"Her ability to stand up to the Leader of the Opposition. I thought her speech a month or so ago was excellent."

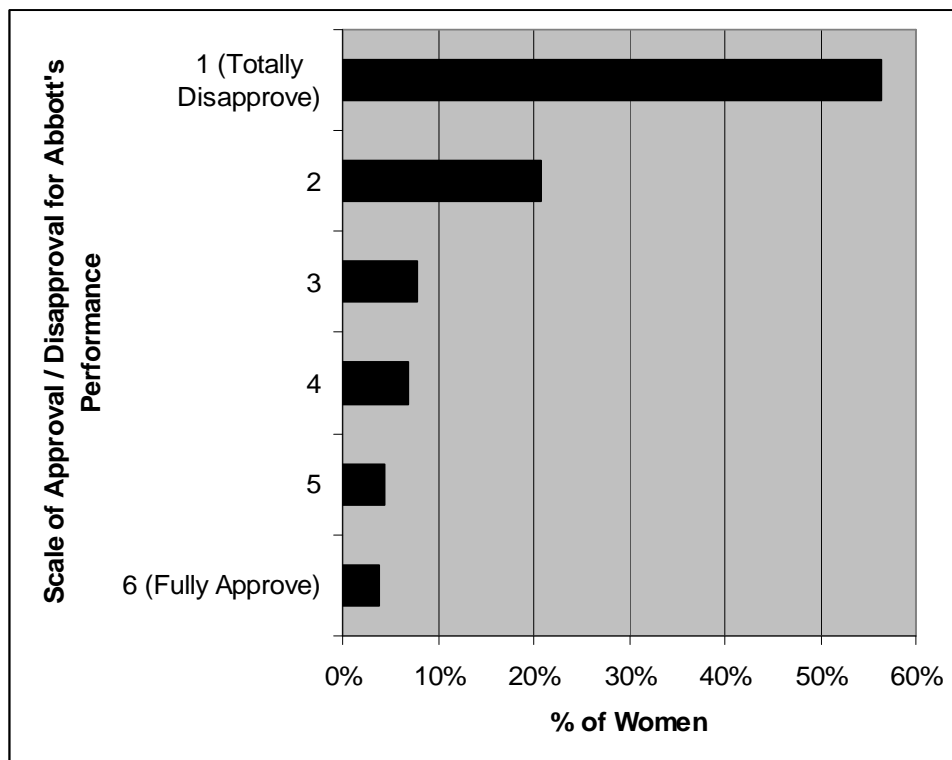
Examples of comments which reflected perceptions that PM Gillard had no strengths and that she is good, but could do better:

"No strengths, worst leader"
"not competent in foreign policy"
"Self-focused, not team player"
"Patronising to public"
"Good but has had to make unethical decision"
"seems to have a reasonable grasp of reality although not all the time"

3. Mr Tony Abbott's Job as Leader of the Opposition

On a scale of one to six, do you approve or disapprove of the way Mr Tony Abbott is handling his job as Leader of the Opposition? 1 - Totally Disapprove through to 6 - Fully Approve

15% (35) responded with a score of 4 and above. The highest score was 1 by 57% (131) of the participants totally disapproving of Mr Abbott's handling his job as Leader of the Opposition. 85% (196) gave a score of 3 and below.



4. Comments on Abbott's role as Opposition Leader

Any comments on Abbott's role as Opposition Leader?

18 positive comments and 318 negative comments were made about Abbott's role as Opposition Leader. In addition 8 comments reflected on the political system itself being the problem.

The Table below shows the ranking of frequency of positive and negative themes.

Ranking of Frequency	Themes in comments on Abbott's role as Opposition Leader	Number of Comments made related to the theme
POSITIVE:		
1	Unfair Media portrayal	6
2	Good Leader	5
	Effective pursuit of Labor	4
3	Man of Good Values	3
Total Positive comments made related to the themes:		18
NEGATIVE:		
1	Relentless Negativity	58
2	Personal Dislike of Abbott	47
3	He is a Bully	45
3	Lacks Vision	34
4	Poor Leadership	29
5	Does not understand Women	28
6	Dishonest	19
7	Statements lack substance	17
8	Old Fashioned and Religious; Values Power	13 (for each theme)
9	Does not care for Australians	8
10	Does not challenge policies	7
Total Negative comments made related to the themes:		318
	Unrelated theme	
	Political system is not working	8

On the positive side, comments on the theme of Abbott getting an 'Unfair Media portrayal' included the following reflections:

*"He does OK in an environment controlled by media spin designed to damage him."
 "I believe Tony gets a bad wrap as the media continues to highlight things he's said out of context or bring up things from his past that are irrelevant to politics today."
 "I think Tony Abbott has been demonised as anti-women."*

Comments on the theme of 'Abbott as a Good Leader' included reflections such as, *"Calm approach" "Doesn't engage in vicious language, unlike Julia Gillard," "At least he can speak without parroting and is happy to have an opinion that can be debated one way or the other."* Abbott was perceived to be *"doing his job as opposition leader."*

Comments relating to perceptions of Abbott's approach against PM Gillard and the Government being relentlessly negative ranked highest followed by comments which expressed women participant's personal dislike of Abbott as a politician and person. Comments that related to perceptions of his bullying behaviour focused on his attacking the person rather than the policy. This was followed by comments that related to perceptions of his lack of vision as the alternative leader and future Prime Minister.

*"The negativity, obfuscation, lack of detail give no idea of what sort of a PM he would make."
 "He is totally negative."
 "negative negative negative."
 "I understand that the purpose of an opposition is by definition meant to oppose, but his attempt to ridicule every aspect of the Labor Government (its leading ladies, policy such as the NDIS) has become unbearable."
 "I just can't stand him."
 "Worst Opposition ever. Never challenge anything except the show pony bills, so much stuff has gone through unchallenged, unscrutinised, disgraceful."*

5. The Better Prime Minister - Ms Julia Gillard or Mr Tony Abbott?

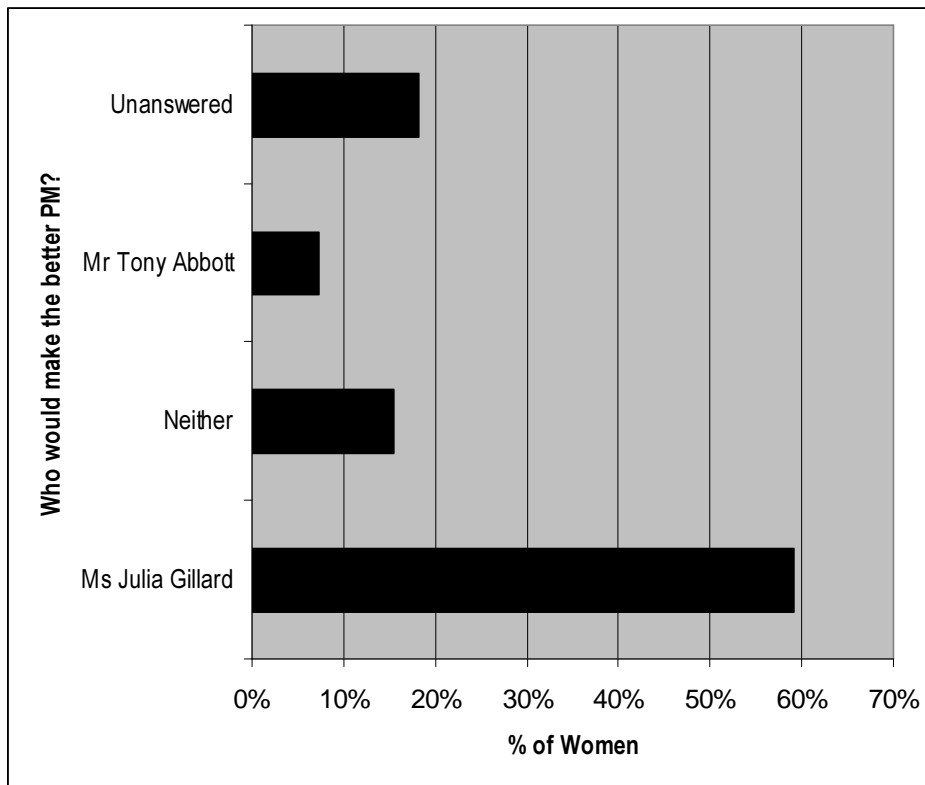
Thinking of Ms Julia Gillard and Mr Tony Abbott, in your opinion, who would make the better Prime Minister?

59% (137) chose Ms Julia Gillard.

7% (17) chose Mr Abbott.

15% (35) chose the option, 'Neither.'

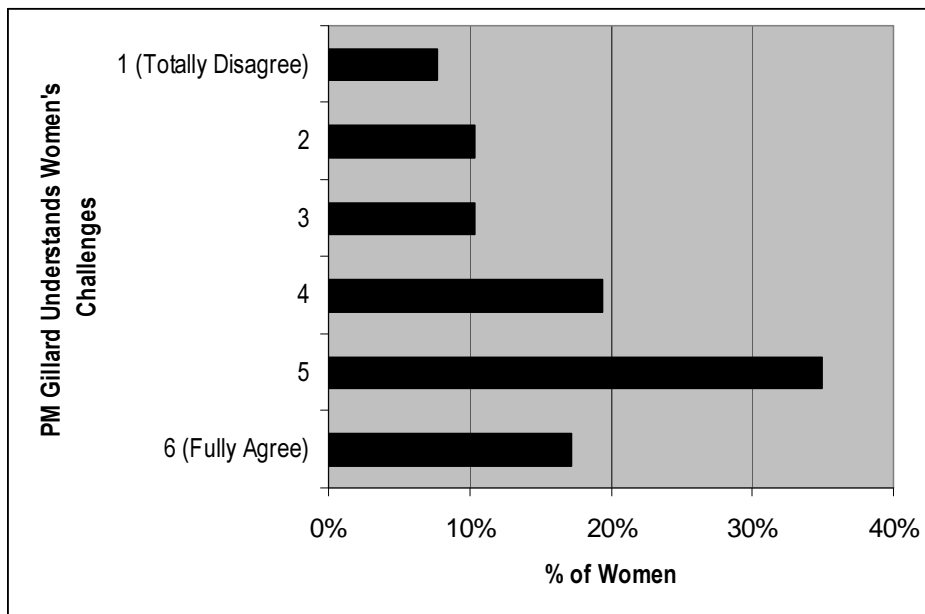
18% (42) did not answer this question.



6. Prime Minister Gillard Understands the Challenges for Australian women

On a scale of one to six, Prime Minister Gillard is someone who understands the challenges facing Australian women? 1 - Totally Disagree through to 6 - Fully Agree

72% (166) chose the score of 4 and above. The highest score was 5 (35%, 81).
28% (65) chose 3 and below.



7. Comments on Ms Gillard Addressing the Challenges Facing Australian Women

Comments on Ms Gillard addressing the challenges facing women:

158 comments were made. Of these, 85 comments reflected the perception that Ms Gillard is not addressing the challenges facing women and 73 comments reflected perceptions that she is addressing them. The Table below is a breakdown of the various positive and negative themes.

Ranking	Themes for Ms Gillard is not addressing the challenges facing women	Number of Comments related to themes	% of Overall total of comments
1	Doesn't understand and has done nothing for women	38	24%
2	Should not have done this	20	13%
3	Understands some women but not others	13	8%
4	Actions influenced by political gain	9	6%
5	Needs to do more	5	3%
	Total comments for Gillard is not addressing	85	54%
Ranking	Themes for Ms Gillard is addressing the challenges facing women	Number of Comments related to themes	% of Overall total of comments
1	Does understand women	23	14%
2	Understands sexism and has addressed it	19	12%
3	Has Good leadership qualities	9	6%
4	Has achieved changes for women	9	6%
5	Constrained by the political process and being a woman	6	4%
6	Is Just starting to understand	4	3%
7	Shouldn't have to understand women as she is one woman	3	2%
	Total comments for Gillard is addressing	73	46%
	Overall Total number of comments	158	100%

Comments such as the following were in the highest ranking negative theme, 'Doesn't understand and has done nothing for women.'

"Hard to fully understand the challenges faced by women who are struggling in a much lower socio-economic situation when you have had a privileged upbringing."

"City women may be catered for but women in Regional, Rural and Remote areas are forgotten"

"I don't believe the PM understands the challenges facing women. We juggle career, home, children and are left to feel inadequate in all because we are not perfect."

In the second highest ranking negative theme, 'Should not have done this' the following reflections were common in the comments made:

"...her one flaw is her refusal to endorse same-sex marriage."

"...she has totally and absolutely failed as a leader in relation to asylum seekers, many of whom are women."

"She has presided over the increased impoverishment of the poorest families. single mother families claiming income support. SHAME.:"

"I am disappointed that Ms Gillard has reduced maternity entitlements since coming into office - not strengthened them. Her government still seems to lack understanding about the importance of empowerment and valuing the role of 'mothering' in the first six months of a child's life and then the need for better childcare to enable women to return to work thereafter."

Comments which related to the negative theme, 'Understands some women but not others' referred to perceptions of Gillard being in a "position of privilege" and not understanding "the impact of her policies" on women who were "disadvantaged," "single mums" "those at home with family" and "who have little power."

Comments such as the following were in the highest ranking positive theme, 'Does understand women.'

"She is a modern working woman who has worked her way to the top by hard work and education."

"I think she understands all challenges facing Aust women."

"As a woman who has fought her way in a male dominated career, and who has built an equal partnership in her relationship, she represents the modern Australian women."

"I think she has a reasonably good understanding of issues affecting women"

In the second highest ranking positive theme, 'Understands sexism and has addressed it' the following reflections were common in the comments made:

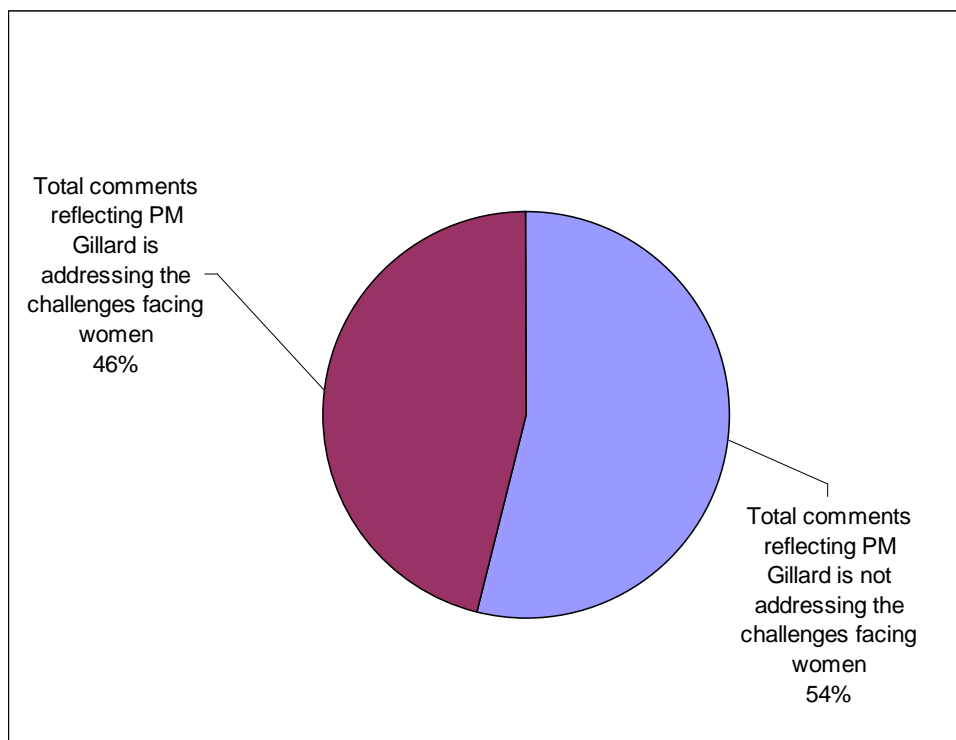
"Her misogyny speech said it all."

"Her understanding of sexism and misogyny relates to all women."

"She is probably tackling the worst challenge a woman can face, that of being criticised for making choices, eg not to be married and not to have kids."

Comments which related to the positive theme 'Has made changes for women' referred to the following areas: "gender equity pay case, workplace gender equality agency and updated legislation, NDIS" "Paid parental leave" "pay equity" and "The National Violence Framework."

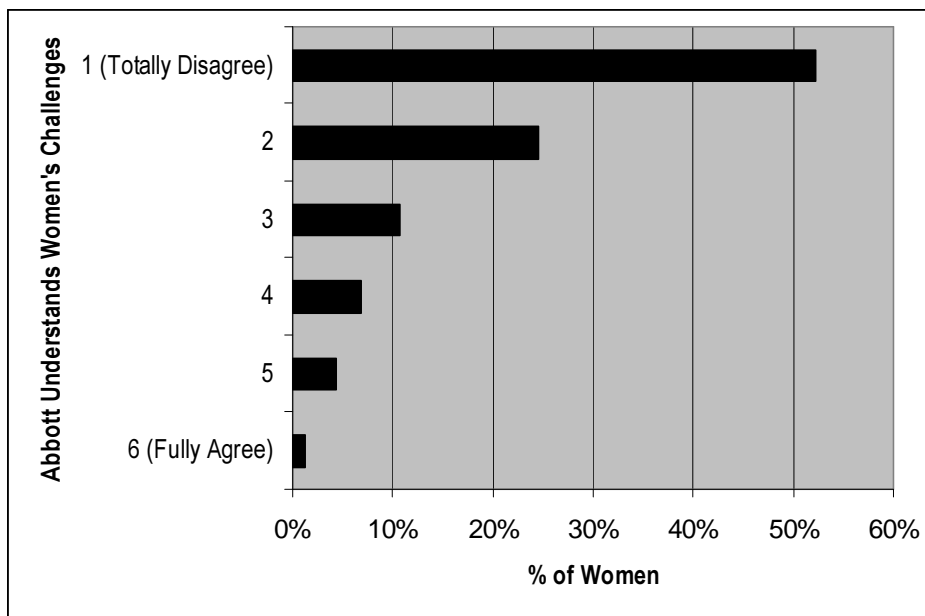
Below is an overall graphic representation of the percentage of comments reflecting positive and negative perceptions to do with Gillard addressing challenges facing Australian women.



8. Opposition Leader Abbott Understands the Challenges for Australian women

On a scale of one to six, Opposition Leader Abbott is someone who understands the challenges facing Australian women? 1 - Totally Disagree through to 6 - Fully Agree

13% (29) responded with a score of 4 and above. The highest score was 1 by 52% (121) of the participants. 87% (202) responded with a score of 3 and below.



9. Comments on Mr Abbott Addressing the Challenges Facing Australian Women

Comments on Mr Abbott addressing the challenges facing women:

153 comments were made. Of these, 126 (82%) comments reflected the perception that Mr Abbott is not addressing the challenges facing women and 27 (18%) comments reflected perceptions that he is addressing them. The Table below is a breakdown of the various positive and negative themes.

Ranking	Themes for Mr Abbott is not addressing the challenges facing women	Number of Comments related to themes	% of Overall total of comments
1	Has no idea	85	56%
2	Does not care	9	6%
3	Biased by Religious views	8	5%
	Is a bully	7	5%
	Feigns interest	7	5%
4	Has not outlaid any policies	6	4%
5	As Health MP, not supportive of women	4	3%
	Total comments for Abbott is not addressing	126	82%
Ranking	Themes for Mr Abbott is addressing the challenges facing women	Number of Comments related to themes	% of Overall total of comments
1	Does understand women	15	10%
2	Understands to a certain extent	7	5%
3	It's not his fault	5	3%
	Total comments for Abbott is addressing	27	18%
	Overall Total number of comments	153	100%

Comments such as the following were in the highest ranking negative themes, 'Has no idea' and 'Does not care.'

"totally out of touch"

"I think he is right out of touch."

"He has no idea - and regularly makes comments that reinforce his very old-fashioned and deep-seated beliefs about women's role in society."

"His views on women's issues, including his views on abortion, are completely out of step with modern society."

"I'm not sure the problem is not understanding - the question is, does he care?"

"doesn't understand that he doesn't understand"

"Mr Abbott doesn't have a clue what challenges women face, he pretends to be enlightened but the reality is he just doesn't take enough time to listen and get involved"

Comments such as the following were in the highest ranking positive themes, 'Does understand women' and 'Understands to a certain extent.'

"Childcare support encouraged and Work Choices voted against (although it didn't change anything) are 2 important aspects to Abbott's understanding of womens' needs."

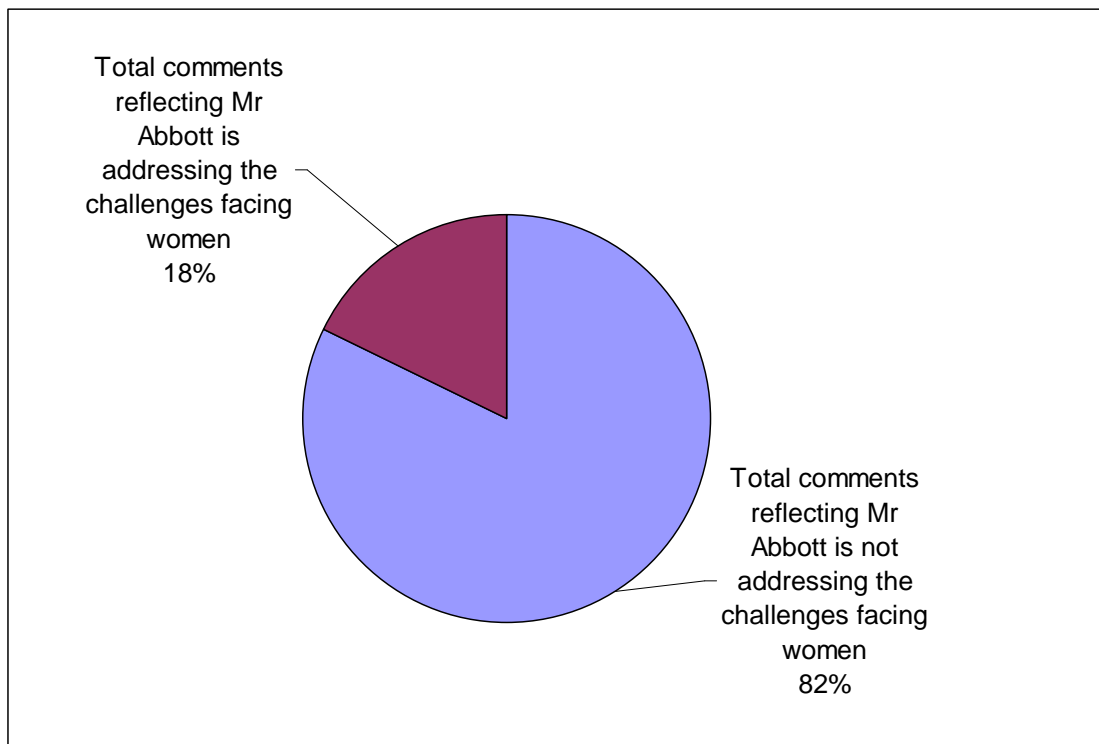
"Tony is a family man with a wife and four daughters - he is more across the challenges facing women given his personal circumstances."

"He understands several key issues eg. childcare, but at the same time fails to treat women in politics with respect and in a professional manner."

"I think Abbott does understand women from a family viewpoint but perhaps not in public life."

"Whilst he may like his women as individuals (aka wife and daughters) he does not seem to have any comprehension of the endemic and something subtle, discrimination and perverse outcomes which affect women."

Below is an overall graphic representation of the percentage of comments reflecting positive and negative perceptions to do with Abbott addressing challenges facing Australian women.



10. Electoral Issues Women Want Addressed

What electoral issue do you think most women would like addressed?

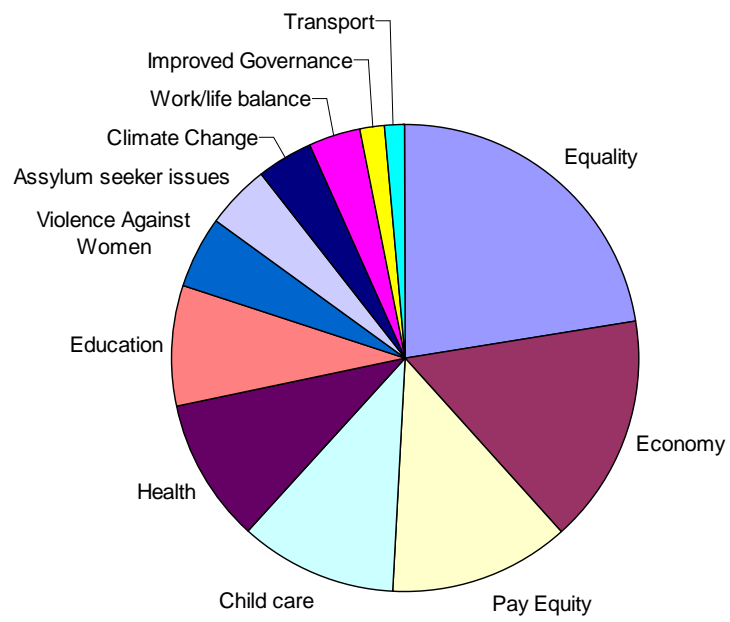
The survey responses for this question were analysed using qualitative and quantitative content analysis. 423 comments were made with Equality being the dominant issue, followed by the Economy and Pay Equity.

In relation to the issue of Equality, the Table below indicates the various sub themes that this electoral issue related to. Workplace Equality for women ranked the highest.

Ranking of Frequency	Electoral Issue	Number of comments that related to the electoral issue
1	Equality	95
2	Economy	67
3	Pay Equity	53
4	Child care	46
5	Health	42
6	Education	35
7	Violence against Women	22
8	Asylum seeker issues	18
9	Climate Change	17
10	Work/life Balance	15
11	Improved Governance	7
12	Transport	6
Total number of comments		423

Ranking of Frequency	Electoral Issue of Equality	Number of comments that related to the electoral issue
1	Workplace equality for women	56
2	Equality for all; Equality in all areas	12 (for each theme)
3	Maternity Leave	9
4	Marriage Equality	6

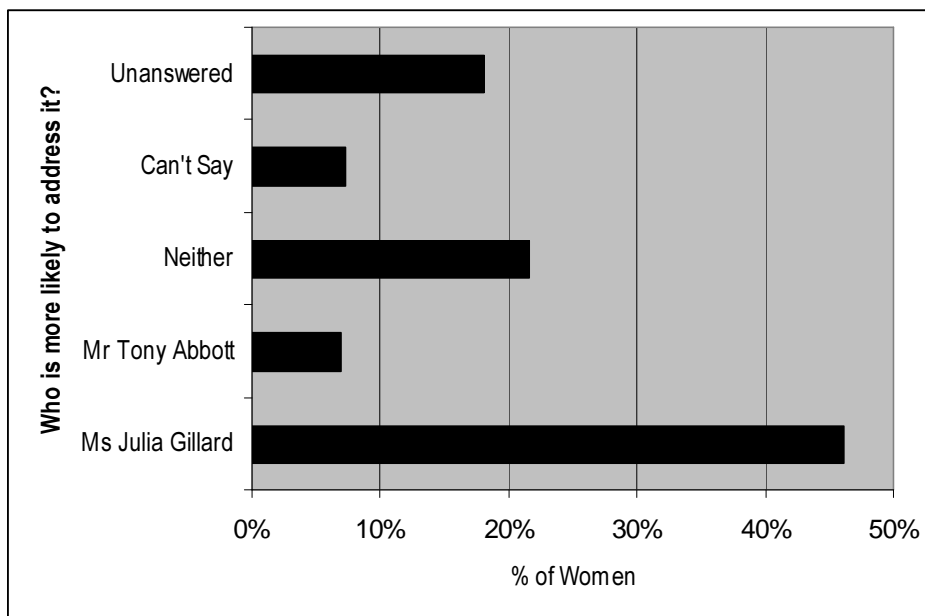
Below is an overall graphic representation of the electoral issues that women would like addressed.



11. Addressing the Electoral Issues Women Raise

Who is more likely to address it?

46% (107) chose Julia Gillard.
 7% (16) chose Tony Abbott.
 22% (50) chose 'Neither.'
 18% (42) did not answer this question.
 7% (16) chose the option, 'Can't Say.'



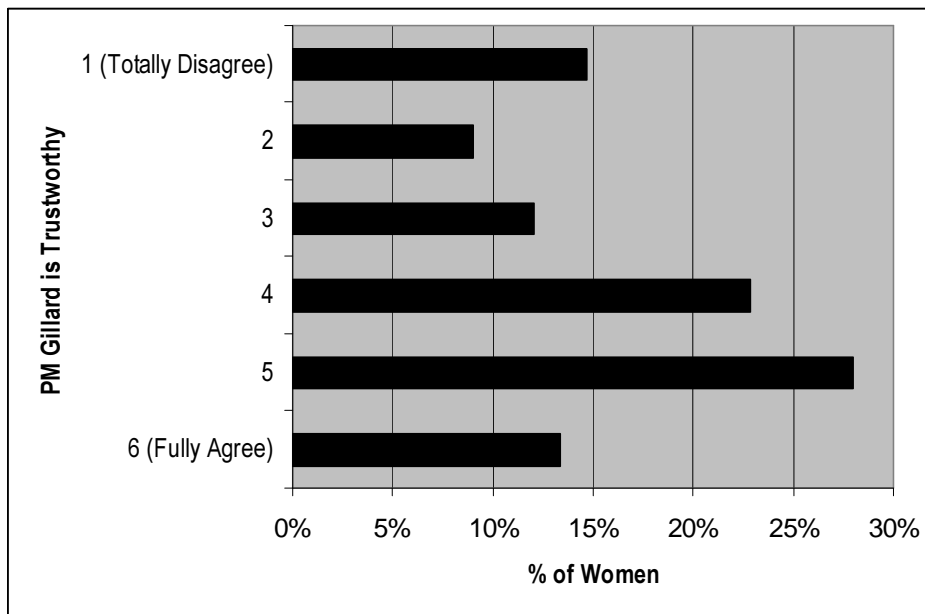
12. Prime Minister Gillard is Trustworthy

On a scale of one to six, Prime Minister Gillard is someone who is trustworthy? 1 - Totally Disagree through to 6 - Fully Agree

65% (149) chose a score of 4 and above.

The highest score was 5 (28%, 65).

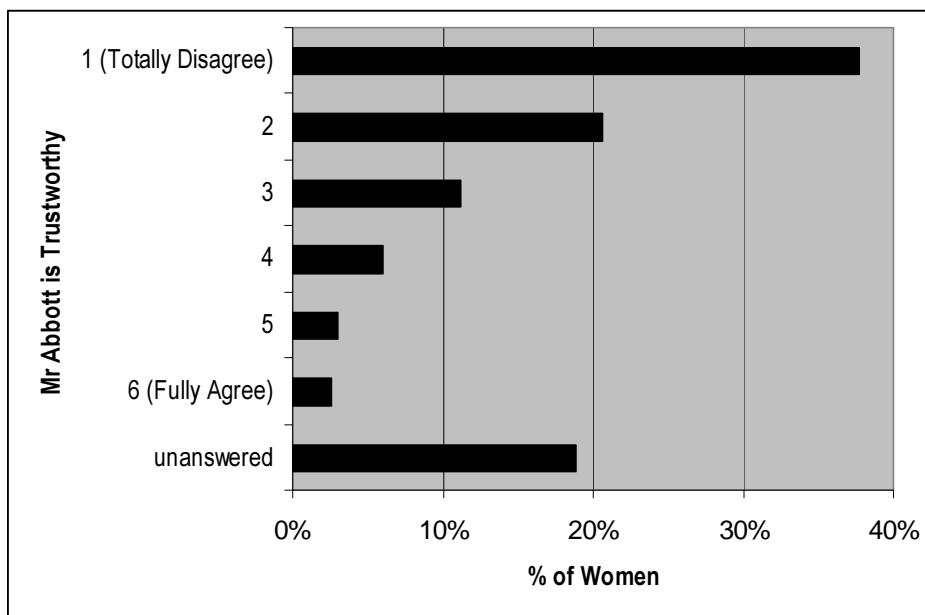
35% (82) chose a score of 3 and below.



13. Opposition Leader Abbott is Trustworthy

On a scale of one to six, Opposition Leader Abbott is someone who is trustworthy? 1 - Totally Disagree through to 6 - Fully Agree

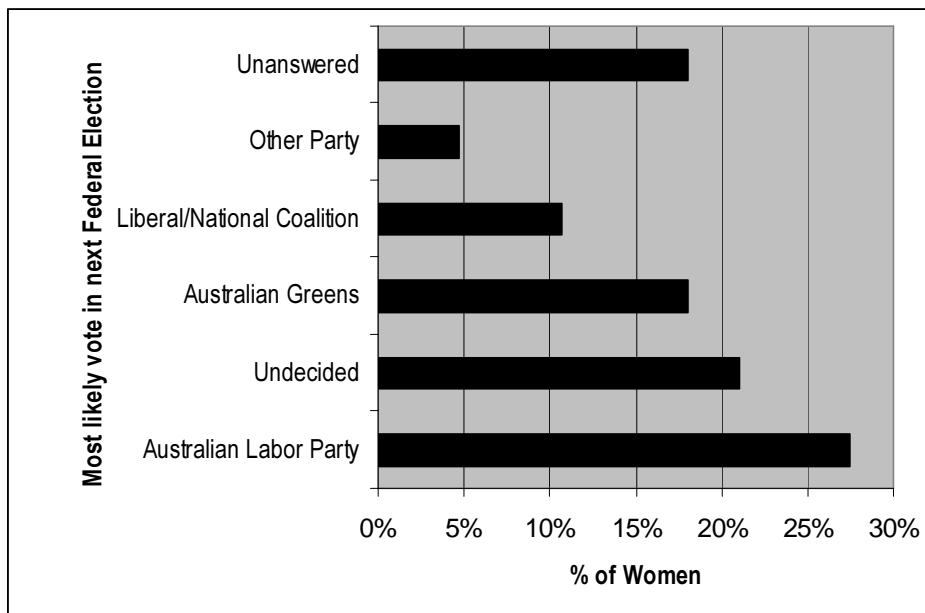
19% (43) did not answer this question.
 12% (27) chose a score of 4 and above.
 The highest score was 1 (38%, 88).
 70% (161) chose a score of 3 and below.



14. Voting in the Next Federal Election

In the next Federal election, which party will you most likely be voting for?

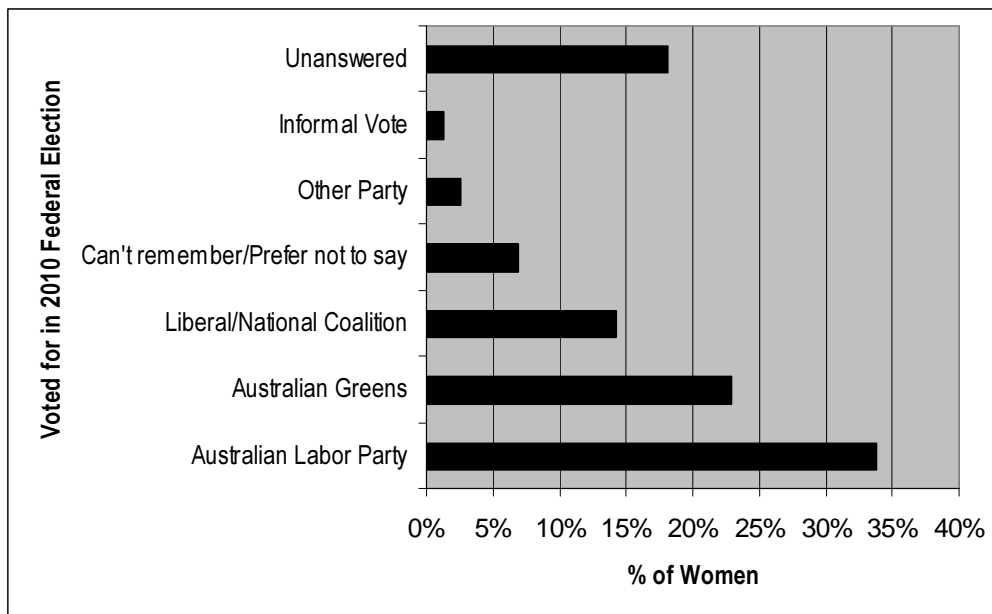
28% (64) indicated the Australian Labor Party. 21% (49) were Undecided. 18% (42) indicated the Australian Greens and 10% (24) chose the Liberal/National Coalition. 18% (41) did not answer this question.



15. Party voted for in the 2010 Australian Federal Election

In the 2010 Australian Federal Election, which party did you vote for?

34% (78) indicated the Australian Labor Party. 23% (53) indicated the Australian Greens and 14% (33) chose the Liberal/National Coalition. 18% (42) did not answer this question.



16. Comparison of Individual Voting Preferences

170 women out of 231 had provided responses for questions 15 and 16. The data was used comparatively for the Tables below indicating that for 58% of women there will be no change in the party they vote for in the next election. 8% of the women indicated that they will be changing their preference to vote for the Australian Labor Party. 2% of the women indicated that they will be changing their preference to vote for the Liberal/National Coalition. 5% of the women indicated that they will be changing their preference to vote for the Australian Greens. 22% of the women indicated that they were undecided about their voting preference for the next Federal Election.

Party Voted for in 2010 Federal Election	Preference for next Federal Election	Number of Women
Australian Labor Party	Australian Labor Party	49
Australian Greens	Australian Greens	31
Liberal/National	Liberal/National	18
Australian Labor Party	Undecided	16
Australian Greens	Australian Labor Party	10
Liberal/National	Undecided	8
Australian Greens	Undecided	5
Can't remember / Prefer not to say	Undecided	6
Australian Labor Party	Australian Greens	5
Can't remember / Prefer not to say	Australian Labor Party	3
Australian Greens	Other Party	2
Australian Greens	Other Party	2
Other Party	Other Party	2
Undecided	Australian Greens	2
Australian Greens	Liberal/National	1
Liberal/National	Australian Labor Party	1
Informal vote	Australian Greens	1
Informal Vote	Undecided	1
Other Party	Other Party	1
Australian Labor Party	Liberal/National	1
Other Party	Liberal/National	1
Australian Labor Party	Other Party	1
Can't remember / Prefer not to say	Other Party	1
Liberal/National	Other Party	1
Other Party	Undecided	1
Total number of women		170

Party Voted for in 2010 Federal Election	Preference for next Federal Election	Number of Women	%
Australian Labor Party	Australian Labor Party	49	29
Australian Greens	Australian Greens	31	18
Liberal/National	Liberal/National	18	11
NO CHANGE IN PREFERRED PARTY	Total	98	58
Australian Greens	Australian Labor Party	10	6
Can't remember / Prefer not to say	Australian Labor Party	3	2
Liberal/National	Australian Labor Party	1	1
CHANGE TO AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY	Total	14	8
Australian Greens	Liberal/National	1	1
Australian Labor Party	Liberal/National	1	1
Other Party	Liberal/National	1	1
CHANGE TO LIBERAL/NATIONAL	Total	3	2
Australian Labor Party	Australian Greens	5	3
Undecided	Australian Greens	2	1
Informal vote	Australian Greens	1	1
CHANGE TO AUSTRALIAN GREENS	Total	9	5
Australian Labor Party	Undecided	16	9
Liberal/National	Undecided	8	5
Australian Greens	Undecided	5	3
Can't remember / Prefer not to say	Undecided	6	4
Informal Vote	Undecided	1	1
Other Party	Undecided	1	1
UNDECIDED FOR NEXT ELECTION	Total	37	22

Women who represent an interesting cross section of online Australian women on women's lists, women's organisations and networks in the majority approve of the way Ms Gillard is handling her job as Prime Minister citing her legislative and policy achievements and her personal qualities to lead and withstand the political pressures. The majority (59%) felt that Ms Gillard would make the better Prime Minister. However 15% believed 'Neither' (Gillard nor Abbott) would, and 18% did not indicate their preference. Although most of the women felt that PM Gillard is someone who understands the challenges facing Australian women, the comments collectively did not reflect this as 54% of the comments included concerns about policies to do with welfare changes, asylum seekers and same-sex marriage. Whilst 46% believed that Julia Gillard will address issues of greatest significance to them: Equality, Economy and Pay Equity, 47% did not think so or did not respond.

Women predominantly do not approve of the way Mr Abbott is handling his job as Leader of the Opposition and their comments reflected their frustration of his 'relentless negativity'. The majority of the women did not think that Mr Abbott is someone who understands the challenges facing Australian women and this was also reflected in the comments.

Although there are more women who believe that Mr Abbott is untrustworthy than there are women who believe that PM Gillard is trustworthy, there are a number of women (35%) who gave low scores when asked about PM Gillard being trustworthy.

Whilst the Australian Labor Party (ALP) was the most preferred Party in 2010 and shown to be the most preferred in the next federal election, there is a small decrease in the support for the ALP and the Australian Greens, and a small increase in support for the Liberal/National Coalition. 39% of the 231 women participants are still undecided about their voting preference for the next election. When individual voting preferences are considered 8% of 170 women will be choosing the ALP in the next election after having voted for other parties in 2010. However 9% who voted for the ALP in 2010 are undecided.

In this study of 231 online Australian women, there is, in the majority, a high level of support for PM Gillard and the ALP over Abbott and the Liberal/National Coalition. However, women have concerns about Julia Gillard understanding the challenges facing Australian women and are not certain whether she will address them, if elected again as Prime Minister. Women's concerns about Mr Abbott are extensive, but there is a minority who believe that he does understand women and is doing a good job.

Based on this study's findings, a deeper valuing of women, an appreciation of the key issues and challenges women face, as well as an understanding of their perspectives on social issues are highly recommended. This needs to be reflected in comprehensive and well-funded policies. Political motivations and behaviour need to demonstrate integrity and valuing of the individual, the position and the political process.

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The Australian Centre for Leadership for Women (ACLW) commenced in 2000. This virtual Centre holds a strong position in the landscape of women and leadership in Australia and internationally. Its distinctive identity has emerged from focusing on the mindsets and achievements of female and male global leaders, in diverse areas including business, education, not-for-profit and government; presenting expert opinions on relevant issues for women; researching and writing about pertinent issues which concern women; developing the capacity of leaders and emerging leaders through coaching and mentoring and recognising women and men who advocate for women in organisations and in the community through its national Awards Program. The Centre's name reflects its distinctive identity among national and international virtual organisations for women.

ACLW's vision is consolidated in its strategic platforms to assist women leaders and emerging leaders in their leadership and to give back to women who have a history of living with disadvantage, and in particular, economic and social disadvantage.

1. Transform

ACLW aims to transform at an individual and collective level, mindsets, attitudes and capacity related to leadership. It aims to achieve systemic change to enhance pathways for women's advancement and leadership. ACLW will continue to focus on transforming the discourse about leadership, the level of awareness and understanding of issues related to women in the workplace and in the community and, the political appreciation of the concerns of women and strategies to address them. Research, lobbying and involvement in formal evaluations will be a means adopted to transform the situation for women in workplaces.

2. Empower

ACLW aims to empower women leaders and emerging women leaders through a suite of focused resources, analysis of theory and concepts related to leadership, and coaching and mentoring for women on a range of professional and personal advancement issues.

3. Recognise

ACLW's Flagship Awards Program began in 2006 with the sole aim to value women and the contribution they make to society and organisations. Women and men, organisations both public and corporate will continue to be recognised for their

initiatives to advance the empowerment of women. ACLW's Roll of Honour features all the winners and their noteworthy achievements for women. In 2012, ACLW will continue its annual Sustaining Women's Empowerment in Communities and the Workplace Award.

4. Globalize

ACLW aims to broaden its scope in 2012 specifically towards women in the Asia-Pacific to understand their leadership experience, recognise leading women in business, government and the not-for-profit sector and build capacity for women leaders and emerging women leaders in the Asia Pacific. ACLW will be inviting leaders and advocates for women in the Pacific region to be Asia Pacific Patrons of ACLW.

5. Give Back

To assist women globally to develop their leadership, ACLW will partner with Non Government Organisations (NGO) to raise funds for programs designed to develop leadership capacity in women. This year, ACLW will be supporting the International Women's Development Agency (Inc) to raise funds for the Karen Young Women's Leadership School in Thailand.

ACLW has already commenced a Women's Leadership Program at reduced fees for women in the South coast of NSW.

6. Publications

ACLW as a registered publisher will publish research and books that challenge and inspire.